

**Climate Impact Advisory Committee**  
APPROVED Meeting Minutes



Date: December 5th, 2019  
Location: RE Store, 2309 Meridian St, Bellingham

QUORUM	Yes
<b>Members Present</b>	
Seth Fleetwood	
Casey Harman	X
Tim Miller	
Treva Coe	X
Eric Grossman	
Ellyn Murphy	X
John Yakawich	X
Sharon Shewmake	
David Kershner	X
Gabriel Westergreen	
Alex Ramel	X
STAFF Chris Elder	X

**Meeting Began at 5:35 PM**

Alex volunteered to chair the meeting since Seth resigned and no chair or vice chair had been selected. The meeting unofficially began without quorum until John Yakawich arrived.

**1) Public Comment**

**Public Address by Satpal Sidhu**

Jed Holmes presented on behalf of Satpal Sidhu – Satpal was absent due to illness. Written comments:

*Greetings!*

*The election is over and it's time to get to work. Action on the environment was a core part of my campaign's platform, and it will be a top priority of my administration.*

*I want you to know that I understand the immense scale and urgency of the climate emergency. I support the work being done by the Climate Impact Advisory Committee and look forward to working with you to plan how we can implement local changes, wherever possible.*

*I would like to get some ideas about how county government and its operations can establish a baseline for its carbon footprint. We need some benchmarks for where we are now and where we need to be in 5 years, in 10 years, and so on. We need to create a road map to get there and regularly monitor our progress.*

*Also, I would like to organize a community-driven campaign to plant one million trees over next 5 years. I would like to see the students from elementary school to college get involved in this initiative. This is not just about getting plants in the ground; it is about getting people involved and increasing their awareness about how individual decisions and actions impact our environment.*

*I would appreciate your guidance and ideas on these two tasks.*

*Also, during the campaign I heard about the need to provide support to this committee. As I get to know the details of the budget and current programs and committees, I will be very open to see how we can get this committee the resources it needs to fulfill its mission.*

## **2) Minutes**

Ellyn moved to approve the November meeting minutes and David seconded. The group voted unanimously to accept the minutes.

## **3) Election of Chair and Vice Chair.**

David nominated Ellyn as the chair, John seconded. The vote was unanimous, and Ellyn accepted.

Alex volunteered to be vice chair. The group voted unanimously to elect Alex as vice chair.

## **4) Working Group Discussion**

Discussion then turned to the working groups which were proposed at the last meeting in November.

The goal of the workgroup format is to help push forward the goals of the CIAC by utilizing the expertise of each committee member. Ellyn and Chris took a look at the committee responsibilities and goals – some of the scope of work will be done by Cascadia Consulting group as part of the contract, but their work does not cover all of the needs of the CIAC. The remainder may be able to be accomplished by CIAC members and other volunteers through the working groups.

The goals and responsibilities of the CIAC include:

- Provide input to policies and budget priorities
- Provide revisions to the Whatcom Comprehensive Plan
- Provide revisions to the Whatcom County land use regulations
- Provide Public Education on Climate Change, particularly local effects
- Make recommendations to County Council and Executive
- Update Climate Action Plan

In order to meet these goals members were encouraged to take ownership by volunteering on one of four subcommittees. It was noted that diversity is good on these working groups or subcommittees as people's opinions sometimes reflect their business objectives. The committee felt it is important that a minimum of two CIAC members be represented on each working group, who

can either lead or co-lead this effort, and also the members should invite community experts to participate on these working groups.

Ellyn mentioned there are good suggestions for strategies in tackling the multifaceted issues with climate change by looking at suggestions from the Community Research Project, the Bellingham Task Force report, as well as developing new strategies. The working groups should also consider shared benefits with other communities and demonstration projects. Demonstration projects enable testing of climate strategies and can show action on the part of the county to create resilient communities

One area that was brought up was to consider current policies and laws that may prevent innovative ideas. Demonstration projects can produce data to support changes in policies and procedures, both at the county and state level.

David asked about agriculture and what category it would fall under. Ellyn responded that it would be under the land use working group.

It was asked whether we require staff support on the working groups? Chris replied that it was not a requirement, and it would not really be possible for him to attend the extra meetings. He would try to attend some if he could. Chris also mentioned that it is not in the Cascadia Consulting group scope to update the Climate action plan. There is always a possibility to increase the scope (with added financial compensation) but they are currently only required to provide the science writeup, green house gas emissions inventory and a vulnerability assessment.

David asked about the Flagstaff Climate Action Plan and whether Cascadia Consulting did draft the plan. Chris confirmed that Cascadia Consulting Group did author that plan.

David asked about the size of the workgroups – what is the size we were looking for?

The question was directed at Eddy Ury who has served on several task force working groups of the Bellingham Climate Action Task Force including Land Use, and Energy Supply and Building Energy. He mentioned they met about 6 times over three or four months. Although the number varies, there were usually a minimum of two community experts who were not part of the actual task force.

Alex asked to make an amendment that two or three members on the subcommittee must contribute their expertise to the working groups, and who can then recruit community members as needed.

Alex moved to approve the structure of the work groups, David seconded. The vote was unanimous.

The four working groups are: Renewable Energy & Buildings; Transportation; Land Use, Ecosystems, Water, & Adaptation; and Communication & Community Engagement

Alex suggested adding working group updates to monthly agenda.

## **5) Discussion on Science Summary comments**

Comments were provided to Chris by Ellyn, David, and Eric. There was concern that the high emissions scenarios were not highlighted, and the results were not expressed in clear, relatable examples. Air quality issues and wildfires need to be emphasized, because the poor air quality in Whatcom County during the summer of 2018 was due to wildfires in BC. Chris suggested re-reading the 2007 climate plan to get an idea of what was proposed in 2007. Ellyn relayed that Eric felt the section on sea level rise needed to be completely rewritten.

Chris mentioned that the greenhouse gas summary should be provided by the end of January, as well as the summary. The other parts (vulnerability assessment) will come later. Alex asked whether evaluation of the goals of the 2007 plan is on the consultant's list of tasks? Chris confirmed that it is.

## **6) Old and New business**

Climate Advisory vacancies are now on the website. The committee members were encouraged to let people know that the vacancies are available, both on the committee and potentially on the working groups.

## **7) Public Comment**

Bob Burr mentioned he was delighted to hear that Satpal says that we are in a climate emergency

Mike Skehan discussed the Whatcom County Ferry to Lummi Island (his letter is attached):

He provided an overview of the current dilemma facing Whatcom County regarding the Lummi Island Ferry. Currently the decisions appear to be based on business as usual practices, ignoring the need to get off carbon. Currently the project consists of a 65 million dollar terminal and new diesel ferry. The climate mandate from 2007 recommends a 40% reduction in carbon, but the current plan of doubling the ferry capacity will emit 2-3 times more carbon than the current ferry. He said that a hybrid/electric ferry would reduce carbon emissions versus a new larger diesel ferry and would allow for gradual transition to all-electric operation. The committee consensus was this was an issue of concern to the committee. It may be appropriate for this committee to provide a letter in support of an electric ferry.

Krista Rome introduced herself. She is currently on the food system committee for the county and is also an organic farmer and Clean Water Program Community Organizer at RE Sources . She mentioned she would be interested in serving on the ag-related working group of the Climate Impact Advisory Committee.

## **8) Next meeting discussion topics**

Ellyn - possibly on the CIAC vacancies, expertise needs and applicant pool

John offered to organize a presentation by a BP representative about BP operations. Chris mentioned that this might be most beneficial to the Energy working group. This working group

might want to consider biofuel production or the possibility of including wind turbines at Cherry Point.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:05 PM.**

Next meeting January 9<sup>th</sup> at the RE-Store location.

Recorded by Casey Harman

Staff contact Chris Elder - (360)778-6225